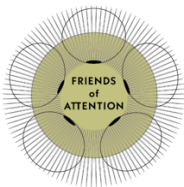


Chat Thread –
Friends of Attention
“First Friday” of 6 May 2022
The Erotetic Theory of Attention
(with Philipp Koralus)



- 14:22:02 From Caleb Smith to Everyone:
Arkansas shout-out! My beloved home state.
- 14:26:56 From Dominic Pettman to Everyone:
Nothing is not about erotics!
- 14:27:05 From Dominic Pettman to Everyone:
(Happy birthday Sigmund, btw)
- 14:27:15 From Dominic Pettman to Everyone:
What's more erotic than questions and answers?

THE EXERCISE (“Attention and the Question”):

- 14:34:01 From Ana to Everyone:
I asked a Chinese ceramic egg how can it be so calm while containing a full potential life. It answered: “What are you trying to prove?”
- 14:34:27 From Philipp Koralus to Everyone:
I went over to my ficus but before I got a chance to ask anything it asked me whether it's been watered.
- 14:35:10 From Kirsten Scheid to Everyone:
I looked at a device on my desk from Ledetech. It was gifted to me for Xmas. It is supposed to be able to hold a phone or a tablet at any angle. I asked it, “How do you feel about not being made as well as advertisers promised you were?” The answer I hear was a bit long and definitely feisty: “Not my concern. I am made to many things. You haven't tried them. So you don't appreciate me. Your problem.”
- 14:35:12 From Jessica to Everyone:
Abandoned Target shopping cart containing empty food wrappers, items of clothing, and a banana on N. La Brea Ave: Q) Are you glad to be so far from home? A) Yes. There is the sunshine. I am resting in the shade. I watch other wheeled things go very fast. And I am still containing things. A breeze is blowing the child safety belt.
- 14:35:17 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

There is a telescope in my apartment, and I went and asked it a question. Initially, I tried asking “what would you like to see?” but this did not yield much. So I tried, “how do you want to be seen?” and waited for a while on that. Super interesting. Felt answers. One, projective, I suppose: “I want to be seen through a telescope.” But the other, later, stranger: “I want my lenses to be seen.”

14:35:42 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

PK: 😊

14:36:14 From Ian Corbin to Everyone:

I asked a paper coffee cup (from a notably hip coffee shop nearby) what it loves. I heard back the word intersections. The shop (in Davis Square, near Tufts University) is an interesting, eclectic place, but it feels not very homey. It feels like a place for transients to cross paths and maybe exchange an idea or two.

14:36:29 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

If you want to email in: friendsofattention@gmail.com

14:36:31 From Shaj Mathew to Everyone:

I looked at a mug that says “American Economic Association” on it. It was left behind by someone who sublet my apartment. I asked who is your owner? Why does your organization’s logo look like an Olympic flame? How many times have you been used? Am I personifying you or using you as a theatrical apostrophe to express my own thoughts?

14:36:35 From Dominic Pettman to Everyone:

I have a leather "kookaburra" cricket ball - unused. I asked if it was sad that it hadn't been in a game yet; it's *raison d'etre*.

14:36:47 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^

14:36:50 From Dominic Pettman to Everyone:

It replied that there is no hurry. It's skin will be scuffed at some point either way.

14:36:53 From Caleb Smith to Everyone:

I looked out the window and asked the Quinnipiac River, Which way are you going, river? I was wondering whether the tide was flowing in or out, north or south. An oyster boat came into view, dredging the bottom.

14:37:49 From Marcus Ryan to Everyone:

I asked a cup what it felt like on the inside. It said , “ none of your business.” So I took a sip, and continued attending to its answer with longer sips. Understanding the answer in notes of jasmine.

14:38:01 From Rebecca Rickman to Everyone:

I asked a ceramic jar if it was happy with its form. It replied: my form is the result of a collaboration between a mind, a pair of hands and the attributes of a material. So I am happy with my form because I was created from intention.

14:39:35 From Jocelyn Shu to Everyone:

I asked a dried tulip petal what it wants to be. I haven’t heard an answer back yet.

14:39:43 From Justin Smith to Everyone:

Unrelated to the exercise, but I suspect there is at least some connection between “erotics” and “erotetics” (the etymology of “eros” is disputed, while “erotes” is better understood). If you’re asking something of someone, then you’re asking *for* something you don’t have, even if it’s just an answer (rather than, say, a sex partner). Eros, classically conceived, is motion triggered by an awareness of lack, and a desire to remedy that. Some terms in English, like “beseech”, straddle the semantic boundary between questioning and longing.

14:42:14 From Dominic Pettman to Everyone:
What Justin said!

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FIRST PART OF THE PRESENTATION:

14:58:32 From Ana to Everyone:

i guess i’d like to hear more about what a congruent answer means? as opposed to any answer

15:10:19 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

feel free to drop stuff into the thread....

15:10:35 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

our group: spent time on the question of AGENCY

15:10:57 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

does “Erotetic Equilibrium” conduce to a sense of agency?

15:11:26 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

do lots of congruent answers DIMINISH our agential range/capacity...

15:15:32 From Ian Corbin to Everyone:

On a related note, one of the heroes of my book is RM Rilke, for his insistence that we need solitude in order to play host to realities that lie outside our current worlds. Only solitude allows for “moments when something new has entered into us, something unknown; our feelings grow mute in shy perplexity, everything in us withdraws, a stillness comes, and the new, which no one knows, stands in the middle of it and is silent.” This is definitely undertaken in pursuit of equilibrium. I wonder if this kind of attention is erotetic, though.

BREAKOUT: To what question is your feed the answer?

15:19:38 From Ana to Everyone:

“What is going on?” and also “To how many extreme perspectives do I see reality through?”

15:19:52 From Ian Corbin to Everyone:

What are the forces pushing for shallowness and manic competition in contemporary life, and what are those pushing for depth and humanity?

15:19:54 From Jessica to Everyone:

My art- and performance-heavy feed answers “Who is the author of the most wonderful spectacle?”